

**AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS**

**Claim 1 (previously presented):** A method for improving the quality of a foodstuff which comprises the step of subjecting the foodstuff to a washing treatment with activated water prepared by contacting water with an alloy having absorbed hydrogen which is produced by contacting an alloy with hydrogen gas, whereby said alloy bearing absorbed hydrogen releases hydrogen on contact with said water to activate said water.

**Claim 2 (original):** The method for improving the quality of a foodstuff as claimed in claim 1 in which the hydrogen-absorbing alloy is a palladium-based alloy.

**Claim 3 (cancelled).**